

REMARKS

In the Office Action, Claims 1-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over EP 0 194 634.

Applicant would like to thank Examiner Paschall for the consideration given applicant's attorney during the interview of August 14, 2008. At the interview, agreement was reached with respect to claim language with which to amend claim 1 to distinguish over the prior rejection.

As discussed with the Examiner during the interview, claim 1 has been amended to define a body integrally formed of a metal or a metal alloy, additionally including wear-resistant microparticles of a hard material. The microparticles are uniformly distributed within the total volume of the metal or the metal alloy. This combination of uniformly distributed microparticles within the total volume of the metal or the metal alloy is present at least in an arc forming region of the body.

As was agreed during the interview, the EP reference discloses a thin coating of a uniform material at an arc striking surface of a nozzle bore. This is distinguished from the present invention which includes a uniform mixture of microparticles of a hard material within a metal or a metal alloy. The particular uniformly mixed metal or metal alloy and microparticles are present at least at an arc

forming region of a nozzle of the present invention. This was agreed to distinguish over the EP reference.

The nozzle of the present invention is obtained, as discussed in the specification at page 4, lines 25 through 32 by having electrolytic copper "intensively mixed" with silicon carbide powder as a hard material. This mixture, is "distributed within the total volume of a nozzle" as stated at page 3, line 18 of the specification.

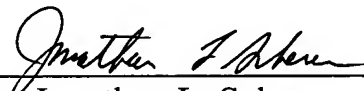
Therefore, by the present invention, a uniform mixture of a metal or a metal alloy and wear-resistant microparticles of a hard material are located, at least, in an arc forming region of a nozzle. This combination of elements is distinguished over the EP reference and as indicated by the Examiner, in the absence of more relevant prior art, would patentably distinguish the present invention over the prior art.

Based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application should now be in condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance is in order, and such favorable action and reconsideration are respectfully requested.

However, if after reviewing the above amendments and remarks, the Examiner has any questions or comments, he is cordially invited to contact the undersigned attorneys.

Respectfully submitted,

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